

Faith, [Hope](#) & Love\_Part26

***Psalm 131:3:*** “O Israel, hope in the Lord from this time forth and forevermore.”

***1 Timothy 4:10:*** “For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.”

Once again, we have our command—to hope in the Lord from this time forth and forevermore—as well as the example of how we are to carry it out. To fix your hope on the living God is a decision you must make and it is to be a decision that never wanes. You must therefore be convinced that He is the only one who can save you; which is why you are to hope for His lovingkindness to bring you salvation. And the Lord desires you to hope and continue to hope and continue to hope until your hope is fixed and unmovable. Once again, let’s turn to our primary passage for studying hope.

***Psalm 33:18-22***

Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, on those who hope for His lovingkindness, to deliver their soul from death and to keep them alive in famine. Our soul waits for the Lord; He is our help and our shield. For our heart rejoices in Him, because we trust in His holy name. Let Your lovingkindness, O Lord, be upon us, according as we have hoped in You.

We have covered the first two phrases of this text over the past few weeks. Tonight, let's start with the first of two adjective phrases which in effect put the "meat-on-the-bones" on this concept of the Lord's lovingkindness. Last week we studied the word "lovingkindness" and realized how important of a concept it is and how it underscores the relationship between God and His chosen **beloved**. We also learned that the fear of the Lord and His lovingkindness are intricately linked. His lovingkindness is lavished upon those who truly fear Him—those who will regard everything that does not directly derive from God (especially all that comes from one's own *flesh* and wisdom) as worthless and evil. The fear of the Lord, or in New Testament terminology, living by faith, is the key to enjoying His lovingkindness for His lovingkindness flows from and on those who fear Him.

"Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, on those who hope for His lovingkindness, to deliver their soul from death..." The verb "deliver" in the Hebrew means "to snatch away," so there is a suddenness about it, and it is rendered in the *Hiphil* and it is a *participle*. This means that we are to know with all certainty (which is the Biblical understanding of this word "hope") that in His lovingkindness God will cause those who fear Him, those who are willing to live by faith, to be snatched away from death; and, being a *participle*, He will keep causing them to be snatched away from death over and over again. The deliverance of your soul from death, therefore, is not just a one-time event. You cannot say, for example, when you prayed to receive the Lord, or when you got baptized, or in some sects, when you speak in tongues that your soul was saved from death. Rather, this speaks of a deliverance of your soul that starts when you make the decision to fear the Lord and it continues on and on and on throughout your life.

Thus, those who fear Him, those who live by faith, are to be confident that in His lovingkindness He will deliver their soul from all its attachments to all that is death; and they can further be assured that this process will be ongoing and continual throughout their lives. Let me make something clear, however, the “deliverance of your soul” is not about of eternal life (as we understand “salvation”), but it deals with the condition of your soul while you are on the earth. More on that later.

Let me quickly address a wrong belief—a heresy—that exists within the realms of much of Christianity. There are those who believe that once a person raises their hand and says a prayer to accept Jesus that their soul is transformed into something new; and from that point on all is essentially good with God, despite the fact that their lives continue to be overrun with sin and all manner of wrong belief and unbelief. To address this contradiction, they say that the sin is in their body, quoting **Romans 6:6, 7:13-24**, but not in their soul, asserting their soul has been made new. They conclude they just have to deal with the reality of sin in their life, until the day they die and are finally done with their body of *flesh* in which the sin lies.

This is a very hopeless belief system, void of spiritual power and life, is rooted in the victim mentality, does not understand resurrection, and fundamentally disavows: 1) the promises made in **2 Peter 1:3-11** which says we can become partakers of the divine nature, for He has granted us everything pertaining to life and godliness; 2) the *Design Point* in **Galatians 2:20**, which declares that if we are willing to die and keep dying, that Christ will live in and through our lives; 3) what the Spirit says in **1 John 3:9** when He declares that no one who is born of God sins; and 4) **Romans 8:11** which says that if the Spirit is in you, then God will give life to your mortal body through His Spirit who dwells in you.

Yes, the Spirit will give life to your “mortal body.” And this passage is not addressing our raising from the dead at the end of the age; for it is clear that then we will shed these mortal bodies and put on immortal bodies, for *flesh* and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God (**1 Corinthians 15:50-57**). This passage in **Romans 8:11-13**, says a believer is to live with absolutely no obligation to fulfill the desires of the *flesh*. In other words, you don’t have to resign yourself to a life controlled and beleaguered by sin as most Christians do; but they can be free from the *flesh*. For if after the *flesh* you live, then you will die (**Romans 8:13**). In the Greek, it is a statement of fact and is rendered in the *present active indicative*. If after the *flesh* you now live, then you will know, in your now, death. So we are not talking about your future but your now. Continuing with **Romans 8:13**, “But if by the Spirit you are putting to death the practices of the body (rendered in the *present, active, indicative*), you will live (*future middle indicative*).” Thus, if you are now actively mortifying the *flesh*, and that is a statement of fact over your life, before long, you will be able to reach down deep in your soul and grab hold of the life of the Spirit that dwells within you. And that is a statement of fact. But as we keep saying, you must first die to live; which, by the way, is a prerequisite to your ability to truly love.

This system of wrong belief has produced a throng of believers who live a powerless and impotent life. It is one of the reasons why the Lord recently told us that so many of the **beloved** live with chopped off heads, frozen hearts, and mutated hands. Their legs are unstable and stumble around though God has created the **beloved** to be truly magnificent and even “superhuman.” Please understand that this belief system is a lie; you can live. It was for freedom that

Christ set us free therefore we are commanded to never again subject ourselves to a yoke of slavery. Thus, we are not to turn our freedom into an opportunity for the *flesh* or a covering for evil; we can be free to love (***Galatians 5:1, 13; 1 Peter 2:16***).

I believe the biggest mistake in this Christian heresy is they think that when they ask Jesus into their hearts that their soul is changed into something “good.” But that is a wrong belief; it is not the truth. The soul is actually left quite intact; rather it is only its attachments that are altered. There are 2 fundamental things that occur when you place your faith in Jesus. The first is that the attachments that connect your soul to its master—your *Old Sinful Nature* (also referred to as our *flesh*)—is cut away. This event goes by many names, primarily the circumcision of your heart or the crucifixion of your *flesh*. But make no mistake, though cut off, the *flesh* is not dead. But since the direct connections are severed, the ability for the *flesh* to automatically control your soul is now terminated. You are no longer enslaved to its mastery.

Second, the Lord infuses your being with His nature. It is referred to as the ***New Creation***, the ***New Man***, and the ***Temple of God***. This new aspect to your being, this new nature, is filled with the Holy Spirit of God. It is where a perfect God makes His home in an imperfect man, for this dwelling place, this ***New Creation***, is created in the image of God, righteous, holy, and true (***Romans 2:29; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15; Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 2:11, 3:10; Philippians 3:3***). It is this abode of the Holy Spirit that fundamentally distinguishes New Testament saints from Old Testament saints. Now, from this time forth, your soul has the choice to choose to submit either to the *flesh*, which leads to death (after all, it dwells in death) or to the Spirit. It is now a choice.

This is the primary dynamic of **Romans 6**. If you present yourself to the *flesh*, it will rule you and you will be its willing subject. But if you choose to present yourself to the Spirit, you will know true life. That is the sum of it all. The language in **Romans 6** is hard since we don't relate well to crucifixion or slavery; and you really have to dive deep into the Greek tenses to understand it. But let me summarize the concepts in order to make sure we have this down. When you accept Christ, your *flesh* is crucified. Being rendered in the *aorist passive indicative*, we know that God has done it and it is a statement of fact. But He did it in order that the body of sin might be done away with or destroyed by God, so you will no longer be a slave to sin. In other words, with the crucifixion of your *flesh*, He is giving you an opportunity to have God give you the victory over your body of sin. But this concept is rendered in the *passive subjective* which is why it is translated, "might be done away with." There is an element of contingency, which implies that you have a role to play in receiving this victory.

Remember, the ability of the *flesh* to automatically control you has been cut and severed; but it is not dead. You can choose once again to ignore God and instead enslave yourself to the rule and mastery of your *flesh*. **Romans 6:16** asks the following question: "Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?" You have a choice; that is your part. Will you present yourself to your flesh and once again be a slave to sin and death or will you present yourself to the Spirit resulting in obedience that gives life? That is the quintessential issue regarding your soul.

Sadly, it seems that most believers love the lie of security, control, and

predictability that the *flesh* promises; therefore, before too long they run back to its rule. But this time they just put Jesus name in front and behind everything and make it all religious sounding so they can feel good about themselves; but it is still just rotten *flesh*. Yet **Romans 6:7** says, the one who has died (and continues to die—it is a *participle*) is freed from sin. Your freedom will be a done deal, for it is rendered in the *perfect passive indicative*. God has already done it, and that is a statement of fact, you just have to learn to experience it by being one of the chosen **beloved** who dies and continues to die to your *flesh*. And if you have died with Him (if this is how you choose to live), you can now believe and be confident that you will also live with Him—that you will know the abundant life He promised (**Romans 6:8**). This is rendered in the *future* tense, which is indicative of the process we must go through of putting to death the deeds of the body. But we can train our body, we can have our mind renewed by Christ, but we must dig down deep into our souls and consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God. That is why the Lord says:

#### **Romans 6:12-14**

Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

The sad belief that we must always live in and learn to deal with the sin in our

bodies, while believing our soul has been changed, is a lie and a true Christian heresy. God says that we are to hope in His lovingkindness to deliver and keep delivering our soul from death. Thus, we can conclude that the soul is not instantly fixed just because we pray a “sinner’s prayer.” Now keep in mind, as I said before, in addressing this issue of the deliverance of our soul from death, we are not dealing with the issue of eternal life (or what we generically call “salvation”) but with the issue of Biblical salvation. Remember, God is the savior of all men, especially of believers (**1 Timothy 4:10**). This clearly does not mean that all men have eternal life, for we know that only those who come to Jesus have eternal life (**John 3:36**). Yet, in the realm of Christianity, these two concepts of “eternal life” and “salvation” have been blurred and are treated as if they are the same thing.

Let me clarify. If you have been born again and have the Holy Spirit living in your being, then you have eternal life (**John 5:24, 6:47, 54; Romans 8:9**). It is your present reality and it cannot be taken away from you. **1 Peter 1:3-5** makes it clear that this inheritance is imperishable, undefiled, will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you. But Biblical “salvation” is all about freedom from death, freedom from your *Old Sinful Nature*, or freedom from your *flesh*. This freedom, this salvation, is experienced proportionally with the extent to which you consider yourself dead to sin and put to death the *flesh* so Christ in the Spirit can live in and through you. That is the *Design Point* and in this we hope.

Now, let’s first take a deeper look at this idea of spiritual “death” and second how this deliverance from death is enacted. **Romans 5:12, 6:23**, and **8:1-16** make it clear that the mind set on the *flesh*, the mind which envy’s sinners and is consumed with the finding its purpose, meaning, validation, and identity in this



world, is death. Why? Because the mind set on the *flesh* is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, *and those who are in the flesh cannot please God*. Hence, the mind set on the *flesh* is death but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace (**Romans 8:6-8**). When it says, “those who are in the *flesh* cannot please God,” the Greek makes it clear that if this is how you choose to live and continue to live (it is rendered in the *present active participle*), then God will not allow you to now please Him; and that is a statement of fact (it is rendered in the *present passive indicative*). So don't fool yourself with your own sense of personal goodness, it is critical that you understand the distinction between the mind set on the *flesh* and the mind set on the Spirit.

Besides, all of this makes sense because we know **Hebrews 11:6** declares that without faith, without living in the fear of the Lord, it is impossible to please God—impossible! It does not matter what you feel or think about this issue, the Word of God is clear: if you do not fear the Lord, you do not please God. This is a big and powerful truth which makes it so clear that there is no middle-ground-of-personal-goodness where one can rest and hide in the realms of Christianity. We either live, at any moment in time, with our mind set on the *flesh* or set on the Spirit.

**Galatians 5:16-17** says, “If you walk by the Spirit, you will not carry out the desire of the *flesh*. For the *flesh* sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the *flesh*; for these are in opposition to one another.” This dynamic between the *flesh* and the Spirit is our contrasting reality and it is the reason why **Psalms 23:17**, which we studied last week, says that those who envy sinners, whose minds are set on this world, will in effect cut off their hope. With their own hands they will take a knife and cut the cord of hope that is attached to the Lord's lovingkindness. That is

the reason why if you choose to live according to the desires and demands of your *flesh*, you must die (it is the wages of sin); but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live (**Romans 6:23; 8:13-14**).

Now I have to caution you. Many so called believers think that just because they say they love God, go to church, serve in various ministries, do Bible studies and accountability groups, and so on, that they are operating in the Spirit. But the true test to determine whether or not we please God is not found in the activities in which we engage, but in the fruit that comes from our lives. The activity of a religious person can look very similar to the activity of one who fears the Lord, but there is no commonality in the effect. The fruit that comes from those whose mind is set on the Spirit is: God's *agape* love, which is defined as joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (**Galatians 5:22-23**). And if you are at all confused as to whether God's *agape* love defines your life, simply ask those in your life to be honest with you, for the contrast between the Spirit and the *flesh* is more than glaring. We may fool ourselves, but we rarely fool others. The fruit that comes from the person whose mind is set on the *flesh*, no matter how religious they may be, according to **Galatians 5:19-21**, is:

- Immorality. This comes from the Greek word "*pornea*" – where we get our word pornography. This word picks up all manner of unauthorized sexuality.
- Impurity. This means everything that is not inherently good—that which has been corrupted. We know from **Matthew 19:17** that only God is good. Thus, this word captures everything in our life that does not originate directly from God—even all our so called "good" works and most definitely

all our religious works. Thus, unless something derives from the Holy Spirit (God) living in and through us, it is corrupted and impure.

- Sensuality. In the Greek, this word means one who is incontinent—can't control their bowels. Essentially, sensuality is the opposite of self-control. In our culture we tend to equate sensuality with sexuality, but please don't make that mistake; they are not the same. Sensuality describes a person who is driven by their emotions, their lusts, and their reactions to whatever is happening in their lives.
- Idolatry. This is placing anything or anyone before the Lord. We can have an idolatrous relationship with our self (which most people do and it comes by way of an obsession on our reputation, identity, trust in our own wisdom and intellect, and on our physical body); with our work; with our money; with someone else in our life: with our lover, pastor, and spiritual leaders; with the image of our parents to which many of us desperately cling; and even with "Christian" concepts of marriage and child rearing.
- Sorcery. This comes from the Greek word for medicine, "*pharmakeia*," where we get our word pharmacy. In our context, this picks up illicit drug use. In those days, people would use drugs to "cross-over" into the spiritual realms and receive information, dreams, visions, and so on from the demonic world, and they used these methods to guide their lives.
- Enmities. This is the feminine (which makes sense) use of the Greek word we translate as "to hate." This includes harboring malice toward others which expresses hostility passively, odiously (which is to make something loathsome, revolting or detestable), or downright aggressively.

- Strife. This defines a person who always creates conflict in one way or another. Maybe you consider yourself to be “the devil’s advocate” or maybe you are just a naysayer, but either way if you incite contention then this word “strife” applies to you.
- Jealousy. This describes a person who is hyper-possessive and reactive to that which they believe they own: money, relationships, and physical things.
- Outbursts of anger. This is another way of describing a person who is wrathful and filled with indignation and is willing to let you have it. This anger may come out in a horrible attitude or in downright physical displays that are violent and aggressive.
- Disputes. This word is similar to “strife,” they come from the same root. But this word identifies a person who loves factions, who always thinks “us vs. them,” who internalizes everything in this manner, and puts in serious effort to create discord.
- Dissensions. This describes a person who is a tool for disunity and loves to always go against the flow. If we are all looking to the right, they will keep looking left just to make a point so everyone will know they don’t care. They pride themselves in the disunity they create.
- Factions. This comes from the Greek word “*hairesis*” from where we get our word heresy. This describes a person who perverts the truth to accommodate their own wants, desires, lusts, appetites, and opinions. And they don’t stop there, they get others to follow their heresies.
- Envy. This is a deep covetousness for what others have; however, this

word also connotes ill-will or spite. So it is not just a lust for what others possess, but it is a lust that is laced with a nastiness.

- Drunkenness. This comes from the Greek word “*methe*” signifying an intoxicant—one who is intoxicated.
- Carousing. This means to revel, to let loose, or to crazy party.
- Things like these. This picks up anything that is similar in nature to the above.

The mind set on the *flesh* is death; there was nothing life giving about those descriptions. This is why the Spirit has told us that those who practice such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God (***Galatians 5:21***). It is simply not possible to live as one who belongs to the Kingdom of God as long as the *flesh* rules and dominates your soul. You can be a religious poser, but there will be no true life and joy, much less love. Therefore, God made us a promise. He said that if we fear Him, if we are willing to hate all of this stuff, if we are willing to literally bet our lives on His name, that His lovingkindness will deliver our soul from death. In other words, He has made a commitment to us that He will put these things away and replace it with His life until, like Paul, we can declare: “It is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me.” But we have to choose to fear Him, or to live by faith, and then in His lovingkindness He will do the rest.

The true “deliverance of our soul” is our freedom from the *flesh*; therefore, it is important to understand how that takes place. Clearly, not a single one of us is “good” enough or “strong” enough on our own to make the decision to put down our *flesh*. We are not capable of such a feat. After all, the Lord says that our hearts are so deceitfully wicked that most of us do not even know when we are operating

from the *flesh* (**Jeremiah 17:9**). In other words, our capacity to trick ourselves into thinking we are “good” and “godly” is unfathomable. We also tend to think this notion of the *flesh* applies only to horrible sin, but that is so wrong. You must understand that the Biblical concept of our *flesh* picks up every thought, every choice, every action, and every feeling that does not derive directly from the Spirit of God living in you. It encompasses everything from all the self-protective ways you live and hide behind your walls keeping others out so you won’t get hurt to all the downright selfish, hurtful, and hateful things you say and do. The *flesh* is all encompassing; if it does not come from God, it is of the *flesh*.

Therefore, in making this promise to deliver our soul from death, the Lord promises to take those who fear Him, those who are willing to live by faith, down the corridor of death in order that He might be the one to put down the *flesh* and subject your soul to the Spirit of God living in you. This is the work God will do if you are a willing participant. Let me explain by going back to our study in **1 Peter**.

### **1 Peter 1:6-9**

In this you greatly rejoice [*referring to 1:3-5 and the fact that our eternal life is protected and reserved for us*], even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

Here is the promise. If you choose to fear the Lord, in His lovingkindness, God will distress you with various trials in order to teach you how to choose to bet your life on His name instead of on your *flesh* and all the ingrained and well-worn reactions of your *flesh*. He will burn it all off in order to deliver your soul from a life of death. The whole fire/metal thing is a wonderful metaphor. He uses heat (or various distressing circumstances) to burn away the impurities in our life—the things that weaken our metal and stress our faith. And being our God, He knows exactly what temperature it will take to remove each and every impurity. Sometimes He applies great heat and others times He just ups the temperature just a little. But either way, it is for the purpose of purifying our lives such that we learn to walk by faith in the Spirit of God, obtaining as the outcome of our faith the salvation of our souls. And, by the way, this is what it means for the Spirit of God to give life to your mortal bodies. With the *flesh* at bay, the one who is life is free to live in and through your life—it's the *Design Point*. As a result, you will learn how to have true relationships, how to experience intimacy, and ultimately what it means to love others with God's *agape* love (which, by the way, according to **John 15** is the ultimate proof that you are truly the Lord's disciple).

Once the Lord applies any amount of heat in your life, you are instantly faced with a decision. Are you going to take matters into your own hands and react, control, freak-out, etc., or are you going to trust in His name. This is how He trains us to live in faith. We spent many weeks studying the name of God so we can know which aspect of His character and nature He is teaching us to trust, at any given point in time. When you choose to let Him be your God and let Him take you down

the pathway of death in order to crush your self-reliance and control, then you will begin to know what it means to live in faith—to actively choose to believe the truth that you have learned about God.

Therefore, in order to hope in His lovingkindness, we must be confident that as ***El Shaddai*** (the Lord God Almighty) and my ***Adonai*** (my Lord), He is behind everything that transpires in our lives. If not, then we could not call Him Lord. Further, we must be confident that everything He orders, allows, and permits is an expression of His great love for us; and it is what He uses to give us the opportunity to put down our *flesh* and bring us in to conformity with His nature. After all, according to ***Romans 8:29*** that is His goal for our life. As I said, God will cause those who fear Him, those who are willing to live by faith, to literally be snatched away from death; and He will keep causing them to be snatched away from death until they know His life living in and through them.

In His lovingkindness, we can also be confident that there will be an end to the trials. We can be confident that once the impurity is burned away, we won't have to endure that specific temperature of heat ever again. If however you fight His process and hold on to your own self-reliance and control, it will come around again and again and again until you relent to His purification process. Furthermore, because we are layered with so much *flesh*, this is a process that must continue until our faith, being more precious than gold, is without impurity. Thus, I encourage you to embrace the fire, seek it, ask God to do this quickly so you can enjoy the life of freedom from your *flesh* that is yours to enjoy.

This is what it truly means when the Lord says in ***Romans 10:13***: “Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be *saved*.” If you truly make the choice to call on His



name instead of relying on your own name or the names which derive from this world, in His lovingkindness your soul will be delivered from death. You will know true life—the abundant life which Jesus promised would be yours. But the pathway is the corridor of death, the smelting pot, the valley of the shadow of death, crucifixion, going up against the enemies in the Promised Land, etc. Whatever metaphor we use, it is all God pouring out His lovingkindness upon us. He wants you to know life and He wants you to hate death; and He wants you to embrace this truth for your own life. Believe you me, it will make the process much easier.

“Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, on those who hope for His lovingkindness, to deliver their soul from death...”

Let's Pray.